

Rapid Spacecraft Development Office

Newsletter

December 1997

Year in Review

One year ago, almost to the day of this writing, I bragged to Al Diaz that if something like Rapid couldn't be put in place within a year, "We shouldn't be in the business." Before I knew it I was off on a new assignment (next time I'll keep my mouth shut!). None of us expected that the Rapid Spacecraft Acquisition would snowball the way it has. In just one year NASA and industry have forged a radically new procurement technique that will allow millions of dollars and countless man-hours to be saved by science missions allowing that effort to be reinvested into science and technology. We managed to get QuikSCAT in place to support the reestablishment of the surface wind datastream that both NOAA and the science community lost with the untimely failure of the ADEOS mission. If all goes well, the data should be flowing again in under a year. The Laser Altimetry Mission will get under way soon with an accelerated launch due to the efforts of the Rapid Team. In addition to opening a route for advanced mission planners to do quick accommodation assessments, the DOD/USAF is looking to buy a couple of spacecraft.

This couldn't have been accomplished without industry's support. So I'd like to say "thank you," it certainly has been an incredible year! Here's hoping 1998 brings similar results.

Happy Holidays!

Jim Adams

Upcoming RFO's

So what does 1998 hold? Things aren't quite clear yet, but I expect we'll award LAM in early February, be asked to support the MIDEX AO competition in the Spring and ESSP AO competition in the Summer, SOLSTICE in the early Fall and an unnamed USAF mission in the late Fall. Along the way expect several RFO for accommodation assessments to be issued and, something new, we'll start posting RFI's (requests for information). For more on RFI's see below.

What's an RFI?

A request for information (RFI) is a search by advanced mission planners for preliminary information from interested industry suppliers. NASA doesn't buy this information but

rather accepts inputs from industry, which may be relevant to accommodating the mission. So (in a day or two) NASA will release a request for information and concepts relating to the GLAST mission. The RSDO web site will post a copy of this information and hopefully you all get first notice of its release. Since the GLAST new start date is out beyond our ordering period this notice will be industry wide. For missions planning to use rapid but not yet defined enough to proceed to an Accommodation Assessment, we will release RFI's as well. What missions are they? Stay tuned, we don't know yet. Just remember we aren't buying anything from an RFI, so don't send us a bill.

Staff Changes @ RSDO

One of the chief architects of the Rapid Spacecraft Acquisition has been Jeff Lamke. Jeff has been appointed to a one year detail at NASA HQ, he will be sorely missed. Stepping into Jeff's shoes to help out Sharon Collingnon will be Billie Smith. Billie has, as of late, been the contracting officer on NASA's Common Spacecraft for the PM and Chemistry missions. We'll get her introduced more formally at the "Open House" in January.

We have recently hired two Mission Integration Managers to be the primary points of contact for technical issues on the master IDIQ contracts and to lead the customers through the mini-competitions. Ron Miller comes from the TDRSS project and Scott Greateorex from the Flight Dynamics Division here at Goddard. We anxiously await their start! Again more formal introductions will be made at the "Open House" in January.

RSDO/IMDC "Open House"

As part of the wrap up of the database task RSDO will host a two (or so) day series of meetings designed to introduce you to the IMDC, the RSDO Staff, our Customers, and allow for feed back on our processes. In addition, vendors will have a two-hour window in the IMDC to review their database inputs. The agenda is still being set but please set aside the week of January 20th (note the 19th is a US Government holiday) for a visit to Goddard.

New Facilities

The RSDO will be moving to new offices in late January. For reference, our new location will be Building 16W Room N115 (just down the hall from our old location). We had hoped to unveil the new RSDO suite at the "Open House" unfortunately our move in date has slipped. So you'll get the chance to peer inside but there won't be anyone home at that time.

Web Site and Other Computer Info

The web delivery of mini-proposals seems to be working well, despite some initial start up woes. We are going to give the home page a face lift in January, including getting rid of that Java script that made everything slow down so much. If you haven't sent us a graphic you'd like us to put on the home page slide show, please upload one to the Slide Show

section of the RSDO web page. If you are still having trouble please contact our webmaster, Paul Fuller, at 301/286-0675 or pfuller@pop100.gsfc.nasa.gov.

Small & Disadvantaged Business Reminder

Just a reminder that if you are looking for a new subcontractor, considering a small or disadvantaged business could help you in meeting your SDB goals in the IDIQ contracts.

Contests

Since I'm not the most imaginative guy around, we are thinking of holding a contest for both innovative names for this newsletter and for the RSDO logo. The prize? Our undying gratitude.

It's likely that the contest for the logo will be open to the public so you may have some stiff competition from area high schools! We'll get the details out sometime in January.

In the meantime we are accepting suggestions for the name of this letter.

Rapid Awards

Sometime this Spring we will make the first annual recognition of those individuals that have helped to further the mission of the RSDO. Right now I'm thinking one civil servant, one customer type, and one individual from a Rapid contractor. These will be peer nominations so start thinking now. I guess we'll need a name for this too, the only one suggested so far is "The Annual Schnell Award."

If you have any thoughts on how we ought to run such a program or if you've got a great idea for a name, drop me an email.

A Quiz

According to mythology; "Who was the Owner/Operator of the first Rapid Spacecraft?"

Here are a few hints:

- The mission was to obtain full Earth coverage in one night, on an annual repeat cycle.
- It was a manned spacecraft with an open cockpit design.
- Seven tiny propulsion modules arranged in a harness in front of the spacecraft.
- The thermal control coating was red, as was the space suit.
- The ground support staff were all under three feet tall.

Still haven't got it? Ask your kids!

Happy Holidays!